

Paul is finished dealing with the problems that Chloe had told him about. He then concluded the letter with practical matters. The practical came last as it was of less importance than the spiritual. May we always deal with issues in the same order.

¹ Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. 1 Corinthians 16:1 Paul is obeying James' recommendation that he encourage the churches to remember the poor (Galatians 2:10ⁱ). There was a famine in Jerusalem and the church there needed help. In addition, widows often came to Jerusalem in their old age to die. The Sanhedrin had a fund to care for Jewish widows, so the church established a fund for Christian widows. Paul put several restrictions on who was eligible in 1 Timothy 5:3-16. His guidelines are helpful for any benevolent fund. If they had family members, they were to seek help from them. The widows that received support were to be those who set their hope in God and who continually prayed. They had to be over 60, have only had one husband, and have a reputation for good works. The younger widows were to marry and raise a family.

This fact that the churches helped those outside their own community should remind us that we are a part of the worldwide church. We tend to focus mainly on our local outreach, but about 25% of our income goes to help those in other places that are laboring for the kingdom of God. We choose them because they are like minded in their love for Christ and gospel, and because they reach people we cannot reach. We try to have funds go where the need is the greatest or where faithful people are giving of themselves in a difficult field.

² On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. 1 Corinthians 16:2 Sunday was their day of meeting (Acts 20:7ⁱⁱ). It is the earliest mention that the church met on Sunday. Paul met with the elders of Ephesus on Sunday. The church met on Sunday and called it the Lord's Day because it was the day He rose from death and the day that the Spirit was poured out (Leviticus 23:15,16ⁱⁱⁱ; Revelation 1:10^{iv}). **Sunday worship represented a new beginning under a new covenant sealed with Jesus' blood** (1 Corinthians 11:25^v; Hebrews 12:24^{vi}). There are arguments over which day to gather because one of the Ten Commandments orders us to worship on Saturday, the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11^{vii}), which in Jewish thought is from Friday evening to Saturday evening. However, in Romans 14 Paul tells us that some people esteem one day above another, and others consider every day holy to the Lord (Romans 14:5^{viii}). He ends that observation by saying, "Let everyone be persuaded in their own mind."

Though Christians still obey the moral laws based on the nature of God, we are not bound by ritual worship or societal laws God gave through Moses under the covenant at Sinai. Remembering the Sabbath is the only worship ritual law in the Ten Commandments. The other nine are moral laws that will never change because they are based on God's character. Jews were to rest on the Sabbath because God rested on the seventh day of creation. Many Christians worship on Sunday as Jesus' resurrection and the outpouring of the Spirit is a new beginning in a new covenant.

They took a collection each Sunday so that it was ready to go when Paul arrived. Unlike some TV evangelists, Paul apparently did not like taking offerings. He accepted

gifts from the churches to support his team in some cases. But when he thought that might get in the way of the gospel, he supported himself by leathercraft (1 Thessalonians 2:9^x). It was the custom of the churches to support the apostles as they traveled to encourage the churches and remind them of the Apostle's teaching which was derived from what Jesus had taught them.

It appears that the funds were collected and set aside before he arrived. Each person was to decide what they should give, and it should be proportional to how much God has blessed them financially, indicated by the expression "as he may prosper." In his next letter to the Corinthians, he tells them to give according to what they have determined in their hearts (2 Corinthians 9:7^x). This would mean that all could participate to the degree they were capable regardless of their income level. This was quite different from the Old Testament set percentages and fixed temple tax per person (Matthew 17:24^{xi}). All believers should have the Holy Spirit to guide them as to what they should give. The Old Testament command of ten percent is a good guideline (Genesis 14:20^{xii}), but we should be sensitive to what God is asking us to give. More than likely, it will be in proportion to how God has blessed us. However, sometimes we will be prompted to give sacrificially because of a need.

How unlike the collections of some churches today where emotional pleas are used to coerce people to give. Instead, it was the individual's decision based on his or her prosperity and the leading of the Holy Spirit and done on a weekly basis. Part of every offering went to the poor. We have a benevolent fund for the same purpose. It is not to help those who refuse to work, but for those who cannot or who have an emergency.

The purpose of the gift was to help those in need in Jerusalem. The church had the sense that they were all part of one body. That is why we give to missions, not only to spread the gospel, but also to help with the needs in impoverished areas. That is why we help the Africa and India missions. Most of our mission fund is focused on evangelism, but in our area, it helps people who are in need through Hope Cottage, Sunshine Rescue Mission, and the Old Town Mission in Cottonwood. Some of you have given above and beyond your regular giving with a special gift when the Holy Spirit prompted, and it always ends up helping someone in need (2 Corinthians 9:6,7^{xiii}).

³ And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. ⁴ If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me. 1 Corinthians 16:3,4 They were to choose the men to deliver the gift so that it did not touch Paul's hands. That is wisdom as we are familiar with the enemy's schemes (2 Corinthians 2:11^{xiv}). By having them handle the money, no one can accuse him of misappropriating the funds. The letter was an introduction of the men and a statement of the purpose of the gift. Paul did not want credit for the gifts and was not even sure if he would be accompanying them. Paul's term for the gift in Greek means "an expression of grace." In other words, the gift expresses the grace they have received and are passing on. When we give an offering that should be our heart. We give back to God to bless others in gratitude for all the grace we have received.

⁵ I will visit you after passing through Macedonia, for I intend to pass through Macedonia, ⁶ and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may help me on my journey, wherever I go. 1 Corinthians 16:5,6 Macedonia includes the churches of Thessalonica and Philippi. We see that at times Paul was uncertain of God's leading. The ocean is rough in winter, and few ships would attempt a crossing. By telling

them that he planned to go through Macedonia, it would mean that he planned short visits to the different churches there and arrive by winter so that he could spend more time in Corinth while waiting for the seas to calm down to travel on. We can see Paul's attempt to make the best use of His time in service to the Lord. He tells us in another letter that we should make best use of the time because the days are evil (Ephesians 5:16^{xv}).

He writes that there were times when he was "perplexed" in 2 Corinthians 4:8^{xvi}, which means to be uncertain but goes on to say that never drove him to despair. We tend to think of the apostles as super-spiritual so that they always knew exactly what God wanted them to do. Apparently, that was not always the case. They guessed what God might be doing but always were open to clear direction should the Holy Spirit speak to their hearts. Was Paul asking for financial help for the journey, or was it spiritual encouragement and fellowship? It was probably both. Again, we think of the Bible characters as supermen, but when we look closely at their words, we see that was not the case. They needed encouragement and prayers for them just like we do (Romans 1:12^{xvii}).

⁷ For I do not want to see you now just in passing. I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. ⁸ But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, 1 Corinthians 16:7,8 Paul had his desires but always yielded to the will of the Lord. He wanted to spend time with them in Corinth *if* the Lord permitted him to do so. He was writing from Ephesus and believed he should stay there until Pentecost which is in spring. The opportunity was great, so the adversaries were many. That is often the case. When the enemy sees souls are leaving his domain to enter God's kingdom, he will stir up his most easily influenced people to resist God's work.

⁹ for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries. 1 Corinthians 16:9 Great opportunities for "effective work" had opened up and there were many adversaries. The Greek analogy is "an open door" and is in the perfect tense meaning that the opportunity will continue. That does not mean there is no resistance. Is he implying that resistance is proof that God was in it? If Satan resists, does it mean that great things can be done for the kingdom? It makes sense, for if Satan's job is to keep people from being liberated from his control, he is going to fight the hardest where souls are coming to know the freedom of belonging to Christ.

Sometimes we guess that God is not leading in a certain direction because we face resistance. Paul never thought that was the case. He saw his imprisonment as being a way to advance the gospel (Philippians 1:12-14^{xviii}). His suffering in Philippi resulted in a church being formed (1 Thessalonians 2:2^{xix}). Jesus told us that if they persecuted Him, they will persecute us, His followers (John 15:20^{xx}). But there are times when we must retreat to return at a better time, such as when Paul had to leave certain cities on his missionary journeys (Acts 13:50,51^{xxi}; 14:5,6^{xxii}).

¹⁰ When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am. ¹¹ So let no one despise him. Help him on his way in peace, that he may return to me, for I am expecting him with the brothers. 1 Corinthians 16:10,11 Paul was caring for his protegee Timothy and preparing the way for his ministry there. He had told them earlier in this letter that he was sending Timothy to them (4:17^{xxiii}). Paul had men like Timothy and Titus whom he could send to straighten out wayward churches. In that way he could multiply his ministry while training them at the same time. Paul took seriously the charge to make disciples. The Great Commission in Matthew 28:19,20^{xxiv} is to make disciples. That means to teach what Jesus taught to

faithful men who will be able to teach others (2 Timothy 2:2^{xxv}). It is an investment of time and energy knowing you are being obedient to Christ and multiplying your effectiveness for God. You know you have been successful when you see them teaching others. It is a sacrifice of love and time to see they are established in the faith.

In a communication with Michael in Israel, he told me that for three months he was teaching a man what I had taught him. My spirit rejoiced because I knew then that he was truly discipled. Thank God he is still doing that with others. He sends his greetings and love to all of you.

"Let no one despise him" is added as Timothy was a young (1 Timothy 4:12^{xxvi}; Titus 2:15^{xxvii}). What he shares with the Corinthians has Paul's blessing. Paul gives him equal status with himself when he wrote, "he is doing the work of the Lord as I am."

"Help him" probably means financial support or arranging food and transportation for his trip to meet up with Paul. "In peace" is added causing us to ask if there was that much of a contentious spirit there that they had to be told to send him off in peace? It was a typical departure greeting, but certainly, if they gave the educated and successful Paul a hard time, what would their egotistical attitudes be toward young Timothy? He told them to put him at ease, which in Greek is literally to not give him cause to fear. Paul was encouraging them to better behavior.

The gift to Jerusalem was from a church consisting mostly of Gentiles who were culturally looked down on by Jews. And yet in making this gift, these Gentiles were acting like the body of Christ and not like the culture around them. Paul wanted them to do the same with young Timothy. They were not to despise his lack of credentials or his age, but to respect his calling in the Lord. You can imagine how Paul would be concerned regarding the Corinthians attitudes toward him. They would much prefer the eloquent Apollos. Perhaps Paul was sending Timothy to further break down their elitist attitudes.

Paul was expecting Timothy to come with other men to help in what God was doing in Ephesus. These brothers were probably Timothy's travel companions as it was dangerous to travel alone. The opportunities were so great that Paul needed their assistance. Paul knew he could not do it all on his own. He knew when to call in reinforcements.

This generosity toward those whom they had never met reminds us again that we are part of the worldwide church. I have always enjoyed meeting Christians in other cultures. We may not speak their language, but we share the same heart. I will never forget one of the times we visited Capernaum. Ray Crowe was leading us in singing songs of praise when a large group of Ethiopians joined us as they knew the tune. Then a group from India joined also. Each group was singing to the tune in their own language, but we were all sharing the same heart of love for the Lord. It was little taste of heaven. The Franciscan monk overseeing the sight was jumping up and down saying he wished it would happen every day. In the past couple decades of visiting Israel, the crowds at each site only grow larger and larger, because the body of Christ is growing around the world. They want to see where the events they read about took place. Jesus' prediction of the gospel going to the entire world is coming to pass (Matthew 24:14^{xxviii}).

I love the fact that we are in place where visitors from around the world stop to worship. Because of it we have Wayside family in Germany, Israel, Switzerland, Kenya, Uganda, India, and elsewhere. The website connects us with the entire world. We are reminded in Revelation that there will be every tribe, nation, and language in heaven

(Revelation 5:9,10^{xxix}), for God so loved the world (John 3:16^{xxx}). And Lord willing, we will be launching the daily devotionals in six languages in the coming years.

The chapter began by telling the Corinthian church to save up an offering for the poor in Jerusalem. When reading through the prophets of the Old Testament, you will find one of the frequent indictments is that there was no concern for the poor. The early Christian communities saw this as one of their main expressions of faith (Acts 9:36^{xxxi}; Luke 4:18^{xxxii}). Preben Vang writes, *Since God provides for his people, Christian giving is participation in God's redemptive purpose. In Christ's community there is no distinction between givers and receivers. All members of Christ's body are receivers of God's redemptive grace, and all are therefore bound to make sure no one goes without the experience of God's provisions. Paul's address to the Corinthians on this issue follows this very line of thinking. The poor in Jerusalem are members of the same community as the Corinthians, and the provisions Christ has given his community must benefit everyone in it. The issue, therefore, is not merely (or even primarily) one of monetary aid; it is a matter of worship.*^{xxxiii}

Generosity is repugnant to our old nature. The old nature wants to receive but never relinquish anything it values. But the new nature that is ours in Christ has freely received grace and mercy from God, and so it desires to extend that grace and mercy to others, and one of those expressions is in the form of financial assistance. Paul tells us that Jesus said it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:36^{xxxiv}). Once we yield to that new nature and give from a cheerful heart, we find what a blessing giving can be.

The women's Bible study has been studying the Sermon on the Mount. This week they came to the verse that says, ²³ *but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!* Matthew 6:23 They learned that Jews referred to a stingy person as having a bad eye. In other words, they could not look upon a need and be moved with compassion to the point of helping meet the need. The verse before tells us that ²² *"The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light,* Matthew 6:22 A healthy eye is one that sees the need and gives to meet it. If we want to be full of light, we need to be generous people, sensitive to the Holy Spirit pointing us to the needs all around us.

Let us not be of the multitude who travel the road of least resistance, the broad road of selfishness with the wide gate that leads to destruction, but rather join the saints who have gone before us, those who chose the small gate and narrow, the road of love and grace that gives of our resources that Christ has blessed us with, the road that leads to life (Matthew 7:13,14^{xxxv}).

Questions:

- 1 Why should the Corinthians give?
- 2 Why did they gather on Sunday?
- 3 How were they to decide how much to give?
- 4 Why did Paul want others to handle the money?
- 5 Why was Paul's plan tentative?
- 6 Why does kingdom work often meet resistance?
- 7 What can we learn from the instructions on receiving Timothy?
- 8 Why is generosity such an important part of Christianity?
- 9 To what end does God use suffering in our lives?
- 10 How does Wayside practice what we learned in this passage?

ⁱ **Galatians 2:10 (ESV)**

¹⁰ Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

ⁱⁱ **Acts 20:7 (ESV)**

⁷ On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Leviticus 23:15-16 (ESV)**

¹⁵ “You shall count seven full weeks from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering. ¹⁶ You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath. Then you shall present a grain offering of new grain to the LORD.

^{iv} **Revelation 1:10 (ESV)**

¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet

^v **1 Corinthians 11:25 (ESV)**

²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

^{vi} **Hebrews 12:24 (ESV)**

²⁴ and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

^{vii} **Exodus 20:8-11 (ESV)**

⁸ “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

^{viii} **Romans 14:5 (ESV)**

⁵ One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.

^{ix} **1 Thessalonians 2:9 (ESV)**

⁹ For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

^x **2 Corinthians 9:6-7 (ESV)**

⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

^{xi} **Matthew 17:24 (ESV)**

²⁴ When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax went up to Peter and said, “Does your teacher not pay the tax?”

^{xii} **Genesis 14:20 (ESV)**

²⁰ and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!” And Abram gave him a tenth of everything. (Abram gave 10% even before the law of tithing came through Moses.)

^{xiii} **2 Corinthians 9:6-7 (ESV)**

⁶ The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

^{xiv} **2 Corinthians 2:11 (ESV)**

¹¹ so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

^{xv} **Ephesians 5:16 (ESV)**

¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

^{xvi} **2 Corinthians 4:8 (ESV)**

⁸ We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair;

^{xvii} **Romans 1:12 (ESV)**

¹² that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine.

^{xviii} **Philippians 1:12-13 (ESV)**

¹² I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, ¹³ so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.

^{xix} **1 Thessalonians 2:2 (ESV)**

² But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict.

^{xx} **John 15:20 (ESV)**

²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.

^{xxi} **Acts 13:50-51 (ESV)**

⁵⁰ But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. ⁵¹ But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium.

^{xxii} **Acts 14:5-6 (ESV)**

⁵ When an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them, ⁶ they learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country,

^{xxiii} **1 Corinthians 4:17 (ESV)**

¹⁷ That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church.

^{xxiv} **Matthew 28:19-20 (ESV)**

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

^{xxv} **2 Timothy 2:2 (ESV)**

² and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

^{xxvi} **1 Timothy 4:12 (ESV)**

¹² Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

^{xxvii} **Titus 2:15 (ESV)**

¹⁵ Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

^{xxviii} **Matthew 24:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

^{xxix} **Revelation 5:9-10 (ESV)**

⁹ And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, ¹⁰ and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

^{xxx} **John 3:16 (ESV)**

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

^{xxxi} **Acts 9:36 (ESV)**

³⁶ Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity.

^{xxxii} **Luke 4:18 (ESV)**

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

^{xxxiii} Preben Vang, *1 Corinthians*, ed. Mark L. Strauss, Teach the Text Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2014), 227–228.

^{xxxiv} **Acts 20:35 (ESV)**

³⁵ In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

^{xxxv} **Matthew 7:13-14 (ESV)**

¹³ "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴ For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.